THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) The views expressed by India on disarmament and non-proliferation at the recent Summit meeting of the Security Council were noted.

(b) The NPT signatory States have been calling for universalization of the Treaty and, in this connection they have in general terms been urging States which are not parties to the NPT to sign the Treaty.

(c) 144 countries have signed the NPT as of September, 1991. Several countries on the other hands continue to remain opposed to the NPT.

(d) No such assurance has been provided.

Tie up with U.S.A. on defence system

*176. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of various press reports regarding tie up between India's defence system and that of the U.S.A.;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and whether it is in conformity with India's policy of non-alignment; and

(c) if not, why these reports were not contradicted in the interest of the country's good name?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There are a large number of countries with which India cooperates in the defence field. This does not in any way violate India's non-aligned status.

(c) Does not arise.

Protection to Handloom Sector

*177. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Govenment have assured protection to the handloom sector as reported in a news item in Economic Times of the 28th January, 1992;

(b) if so, what are the full details of the programme worked out with special reference to Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh; and

(c) whether Government have ensured maximum export of handlooms and retention of mill cloth for the domestic market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In order to preserve the unique role of handlooms and also to improve the socio-economic conditions of the handloom weavers, Government is implementing the following measures throughout the country including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

(i) The Hank Yarn Obligation Scheme to ensure production of hank yarn for the handloom sector;

(ii) Loan assistance towards Share capital participation in weavers cooperative spinning mills for production of yarn for the handloom sector;

(iii) Assistance to the National Handloom Development Corporation for their yarn supply operations and development activities;

(iv) Janata Cloth Scheme;

(v) Welfare measures under Thrift Fond Scheme and Workshed-cum-Housing Scheme;